

STORIES FROM THE
OLD TESTAMENT
TOLD FOR CHILDREN



CAROLINE KELLOGG

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Testament

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STORIES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT



He Played He Was King

STORIES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

TOLD FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

By
CAROLINE KELLOGG

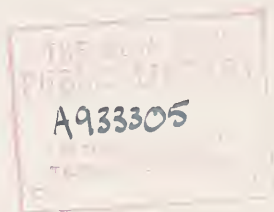
AUTHOR OF
Stories from the Life of Jesus, etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
W. R. LOHSE

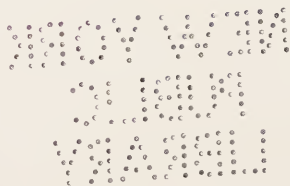
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J O S E P H

STORIES

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

HOW A BOY'S DREAMS CAME TRUE

I

IN front of his father's wide black tent, Joseph, a little boy, played with the snowy lamb his father had given him. His big brothers came by and teased him, saying:

"By and by you will be big and will have to go out to work as we do. You can not stay at home and play with your lamb always."

Joseph had no answer for them. He looked after them, and wondered why they always liked to tease him, and were never kind to him. Then he sat down under a tree which grew near the tent and began to dream about what he would do when he was big. He would be

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rich like his father and have a big tent, and have lots and lots of sheep and lambs, and big herds of cattle and camels and wide fields of grain.

Joseph loved the grain fields. Sometimes he walked through them and pretended that the tall stalks were people who talked to him. When the wind blew and bent the tall stalks, he played that he was a king and that they were bowing to him as he passed. Perhaps he would be a king some day, and then his big brothers would not tease him, but would bow down to him as the tall stalks of corn did.

One night when Joseph was older he went outside the tent and lay down in the grass. Looking up at the stars, he began to pretend that they were people, big people like his brothers, and smaller people like himself, and very little people like his baby brother, Benjamin; and the moon was the king of them all, and the big stars and the small ones and the very little ones bowed down to the moon.

Because he thought about being king when he was grown up, and because he pretended that the stars were people, he dreamed about them at night.

Joseph grew to be a big boy. One evening he and his father and his big brothers sat outside the tent door. Joseph, lying on the grass with his hands under his head, looked up into the sky gradually growing darker and darker in the twilight. Suddenly he sat up.

"Last night," he said, "I had a strange dream. I dreamed we were all out in the wide field binding the grain, and suddenly my sheaf stood up straight, and your sheaves bowed down to my sheaf."

Joseph's big brothers laughed scornfully.

"Do you suppose," asked Judah, "that your dream means that some day you will rule over us, and that we shall bow down to you? Never will that happen, you foolish boy."

And because his brothers were always scornful and unkind, Joseph said nothing more.

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But another night, when they all sat together outside the tent door, he spoke again.

“Father, last night I dreamed that I was a king, and that the sun and moon and eleven stars came and bowed down to me.”

This time his father reproved him.

“Do not think, Joseph,” he said, “that your dream means that I and your mother and your brothers will bow down to you. Come into the tent with me. Your brothers are provoked with you and your foolish dreams.”

After this, when Joseph’s brothers wanted to tease him, they called him the dreamer.

But Jacob loved Joseph and understood him and his happy dreams. Because he loved him so dearly, he gave him a present. It was a beautiful coat, woven of many colored threads, all the lovely reds and yellows and browns and purples that glow in the leaves in the autumn. His father’s love and the beautiful present made Joseph very happy, but it made his older brothers envious and more cruel than ever.

It was hard to find grass enough for all of Jacob's cattle and camels and sheep, for he was a rich man with great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. So the big brothers decided they would go to Shechem, a beautiful valley where there was plenty of grass.

One day Jacob said to Joseph:

"I want you to go to Shechem to-day, and see how your brothers are getting along."

Joseph put on the beautiful coat his father had given him, and started on his long journey. Though it was a long way and he must go alone, he was not afraid; his father, Jacob, had taught him that the great Jehovah was his Heavenly Father, and that always He watched and took care of His children.

When Joseph came at last to Shechem, his brothers were not there. A man walking in the fields saw Joseph looking for them.

"Your brothers were here," the man told him, "but they have moved on to Dothan."

So, though Joseph was tired and though

the road was a lonely one, he went on to Dothan. There the big brothers were watching their sheep.

“Look,” one of them shouted to the others. “Here comes the dreamer.”

Then into their jealous, selfish hearts, came a very wicked thought. They came close together and began to whisper about Joseph.

“Let’s put him to death,” they said. “There is no one here to see us and no one will ever know how it happened. We will take his beautiful coat and dip it in the blood of a kid, and show it to our father and he will think some wild beast killed him.”

But Reuben said:

“No, no, we can not do that. It would break our poor old father’s heart. Here is a deep pit; let us put him down here and leave him.”

To himself Reuben said, “After a while when the others are not looking, I shall take Joseph out of the pit and send him home to our father.”

But Reuben went away to another part of

the field, and the other brothers, sitting down to eat their dinner, saw a train of camels coming.

"Ah," they said, "here come some traders going down into Egypt. Let us sell Joseph to them. Then he will never trouble us again with his foolish dreams."

So when the traders came near, the brothers called out to them:

"Do you want to buy a strong, young boy?"

"What will you take for him?" asked the traders.

They came near, and made a bargain with the brothers for Joseph who was down in the dark pit, begging them to take him out and let him go home to his father.

So Joseph was sold, and taken far, far away from his home, down into Egypt. He was very sad and lonely, but always he remembered that his Heavenly Father was near to care for him.

"I am a big boy," he kept telling himself over and over. "I shall try to be brave and good."

When the traders saw how brave and good he was, they liked him and were kind to him. When they came to Egypt they sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the king's soldiers, and he, too, soon found out that Joseph was brave and good and true, even though he was so far away from home and all his friends, and Potiphar liked him and trusted him and was very kind to him.

But back in Canaan, Jacob watched and waited for his beloved son, Joseph. Day after day passed with no word.

After many days the brothers came home and to the anxious father they told their wicked lie.

"See," they said, "we found the beautiful coat you gave to Joseph; it is covered with blood. Some wild beast has killed him."

And Jacob's heart was broken. He wept for his son whom he loved, and would not be comforted.

II

Potiphar, Captain of the King's Guards, loved and trusted Joseph, and as Joseph grew to be a man, he was shown more and more honor. Because of this many in the king's court were jealous, and tried to do Joseph harm.

One day Potiphar went away on a journey and left Joseph in charge of his home and all of his affairs. Joseph's enemies persuaded Potiphar's wife to help them get Joseph into trouble, and when Potiphar came back, she told him that Joseph had been very wicked while he was away. Of course, Potiphar believed his wife, and so had Joseph put in prison. But even in prison Joseph was true and good, and made friends. Soon the keeper of the prison trusted Joseph so much that he gave him charge of the other prisoners.

In the same prison were the king's butler and the king's baker. One morning when Jo-

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seph came with their breakfast, they told him they had had strange dreams that troubled them. The butler said:

“I dreamed of a grape-vine having three branches, and on each branch was a bunch of ripe grapes, and I took the grapes and pressed out the juice into a cup and gave it to the king to drink.”

“The dream means,” Joseph said, “that in three days you will be released from prison and become again the king’s butler.”

“And I dreamed,” said the baker, “of three baskets of baked meats piled one above the other, and I carried them on my head, and birds came and ate from the baskets on top.”

“That means,” said Joseph, “that in three days you will be released from prison, but you will be put to death.”

In three days the baker was hung, as Joseph said he would be, and the butler was sent for, to come again and serve the king.

As he left the prison, Joseph said:

"When you come into the king's presence, remember me. Perhaps, if you will speak of me to the king, he will have me released from prison."

But the butler forgot all about Joseph, and for two years longer, he was kept in prison.

One morning the king was troubled because of dreams he had had in the night. He sent for all of his magicians and wise men, but not one could tell him the meaning of his dreams. Then it was that the butler remembered Joseph.

"When I was in prison, oh, King," he said, "there was a man named Joseph who could tell the meaning of dreams."

"Send for him at once," ordered the king.

So at last Joseph was released from prison. He shaved himself and put on his best clothes, and was brought before the king. And the king said to Joseph:

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"I have dreamed strange dreams, and no one can tell me what they mean. I have heard that you can tell the meaning of dreams."

And Joseph answered the king, saying:

"It is not I but God who can tell what your dreams mean."

Then the king said to Joseph:

"I dreamed that I stood upon the bank of a river, and I saw seven fat cows come up out of the river and begin to eat grass in the meadow. Then seven lean cows came up out of the river, and these lean cows ate up the fat cows, but it did not make them any fatter.

"And then I dreamed another dream. I dreamed I saw seven ears of corn growing on one stalk, full and good; and I saw seven ears of corn that were poor and blasted, and the seven poor ears of corn devoured the seven good ears of corn, but it did not make them any better."

When Joseph had listened to the king's

dreams, God told him in his heart what they meant, and he told their meaning to the king.

“Both dreams have the same meaning,” he said. “The seven fat cows, and the seven good ears of corn mean that there will be seven years of plenty in Egypt, seven years when the harvests will be good, and there will be more grain than we need. The seven lean cows and the seven poor ears of corn mean that after the seven years of plenty, there will be seven years of famine, when nothing will grow in Egypt.”

Then Joseph, who was wise and good, said to the king:

“The thing to do is to find a man who can store away enough of the grain that grows in the seven years of plenty to feed the people during the seven years of famine.”

And the king said to Joseph:

“Because your God has told you what my dreams mean, I know you are wise and good,

so I shall choose you to be the governor of Egypt, and you shall build store houses in which to save the grain we shall need during the years of famine which are to come. And I shall make you rich and great. No one will be richer and greater in all the country except the king."

And Pharaoh took off his ring and put it upon Joseph's finger, and he gave him fine clothes to wear, and a gold chain to wear about his neck. He gave him a chariot to ride in, and as Joseph drove through the streets people bowed down to him, and showed him great honor.

III

The seven years of famine came also to Canaan where Jacob and Benjamin and the other brothers of Joseph lived, and the cattle were starving because there was no grain for them to eat.

"We must have grain for our cattle," said

Jacob to his sons. "Take money and go down into Egypt where they have grain to sell."

So Joseph's ten brothers went down into Egypt to buy corn, but Benjamin, the youngest brother, stayed at home with his father, Jacob.

Now Joseph was the governor of Egypt, and many people came to him to buy corn, and among them were Joseph's brothers. They came before Joseph and bowed down before him, as the other people did. They did not know that this great, rich man was their brother Joseph, but Joseph knew them, and he remembered his dream of the ten sheaves of grain that bowed down to his sheaf, and his dream of the moon and the sun and the stars which bowed down to his star.

Joseph asked them if they had a father, and if they had any other brothers, and they told him of their father, Jacob, and of their younger brother, Benjamin. He sold them the corn they wanted, but he said:

"If you come again to buy corn you must

bring your brother, Benjamin. Unless you do you shall not see my face.”

Joseph told his servants to fill his brothers’ sacks with corn, and to put on top of the corn the money they had paid him, and when they came home they were amazed to find that in their sacks they had both the money and the corn.

After many days the corn was gone, and Jacob said to his sons:

“You must go again to Egypt to buy corn.”

But the sons said:

“There is no use in our going unless we take Benjamin with us.”

“No, no,” the father cried. “You can not take Benjamin. My son Joseph is dead; I can not give up my son Benjamin.”

But Judah answered:

“The governor of Egypt said, ‘Unless you bring your brother with you, you shall not see my face.’ Send the lad with me, father. I will take care of him with my life.”

At last Jacob said:

“Take the man a present of honey and nuts and almonds. Take back the money that was left in your sacks, and take also your brother Benjamin. And may the Heavenly Father give you mercy before the man, that he may send you all back safely to me.”

The ten brothers took the present of honey and nuts and almonds, and they took the money which had been put back into their sacks with the corn, and they took Benjamin, and went down into Egypt and stood again before Joseph.

They gave Joseph the presents their father had sent, and Joseph asked:

“Is your father well?”

They bowed down their heads to Joseph, and said:

“Thy servant, our father, is well.”

Joseph was kind to them, and invited them to dine in his house, which was a great honor.

Joseph told his servants to fill each man's

sack as full as it would hold of corn, and then to put in the sacks again the money they had brought.

The brothers enjoyed their dinner in Joseph's house, never thinking this was their brother whom they had treated so cruelly. But Joseph knew and loved his brothers even though they had been so unkind to him. And in his heart he planned a way to find out whether they had grown any kinder and any more unselfish than they had been in that long-ago time. He wanted to know whether they loved their father and their brother Benjamin.

The next morning the men started on their journey home. They had not traveled far when there came following after them some of Joseph's servants.

The brothers were frightened when they saw these men, and wondered what they were coming for. When the servants came near they said:

"Our master was kind to you and treated

you well. How could you be so wicked and repay his kindness by stealing his silver cup?"

The brothers were surprised and of course they all said they had not taken the cup.

"Search us," they said. "Look through our sacks; the one in whose sack you find it will pay for it with his life."

So the servants opened all the sacks. The last one they opened was Benjamin's, and there in Benjamin's sack they found the silver cup!

Not Benjamin! No, no! Not Benjamin could be sent back to that man who had seemed so kind, and who had done this cruel thing to trick them. Not Benjamin! He was the youngest, and they loved him most, and it would break their poor old father's heart. No, no, not Benjamin!

"I will go," said Judah. "I will pay with my life, but you may not take Benjamin."

"Come," he said to his brothers. "We will all go back and tell this man about our poor

old father at home, and he may take my life but I am sure when he hears how our father is old and his heart is sad because of our brother Joseph, he will not make us give up Benjamin to him."

So they went back to the city, and when Joseph saw them coming, he longed to go out and meet them and tell them who he was. But he waited until they came into his presence, and he listened to their story, and saw that these brothers were no longer selfish and unkind. Each one of them was willing to give up his life to save his brother Benjamin, and to save his poor old father from further suffering. When Joseph had heard them, he went away by himself and wept, because his heart was full of joy. Then he went back to where they were waiting to hear what his answer would be, and he said:

"I have something to tell you that will astonish you, I am sure. When you first came to

Egypt I knew who you were, but none of you knew me. I am your brother Joseph."

Oh, how frightened the men were then! This great man, with all power to do just as he chose, their brother Joseph whom they had treated so badly! He would have them all put to death; that was why he had had them brought back. They fell down before him and began to beg for forgiveness and mercy.

"Get up," Joseph said to them. "I have long since forgiven you. I have only love for you in my heart. No harm has come to me because of what you did. The Heavenly Father has taken care of me, and made me able to help you and many others in this time of famine. Go back, now, to our father, and tell him I am still alive. Bring him to Egypt, and we shall all live together here where there is plenty for us all."

When the brothers went back to Canaan and told their father the wonderful news, he could

not believe it. But when he saw the presents Joseph had sent to him, and the wagons in which they were to journey back to Egypt, he believed and rejoiced.

On the way down to Egypt the brothers often talked of Joseph's dreams and how those dreams had all come true.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

THE LITTLE SISTER WHO HELPED

THIS story is about a little baby boy and his sister, and a cruel king and a lovely princess. It is a true story of a long-ago time and a far-away land. The people in this true story were God's people and the far-away land was Egypt. The wicked king was the ruler of Egypt and was called Pharaoh.

Looking out upon God's people the wicked Pharaoh said:

"They are becoming too many and too strong for us. We must do something to take away their strength and power."

With his cruel mind he thought and thought, and at last he made a very wicked law.

"Every boy baby that is born among those people," he said, "must be thrown in our great River Nile and drowned. So there will be no little boys to grow up into big, strong men."

In one home among God's people there was a little girl named Miriam. Always she wished for a baby brother, and one day her beautiful wish came true. Miriam was so happy, and the tiny baby was so dear and sweet the father and mother could not help being happy, too. But they told Miriam she must be very careful not to tell anybody about the baby, for Pharaoh's soldiers would be sure to hear about him. Miriam could never take her baby brother out for a walk, and show him to her friends and playmates, as little girls love to do with baby brothers. Oh, no, indeed, they had to keep his coming a secret, so the cruel king would never find out about him.

They named the baby Moses and every day he grew sweeter and prettier and bigger, and each day he cried a little louder and laughed a little more than the day before. At last his mother said:

"I am afraid we can not hide the baby much longer. He cries so loud now, people will cer-

tainly hear him. The king's soldiers, going by, will hear him, and come in and take him away from us and drown him in the river."

One day the mother said to Miriam:

"You must watch the baby very carefully for a little while. I am going down to the river, but I shall not be gone long."

Miriam felt very proud of being left alone to take care of the baby Moses, who was asleep, and she sat close beside him, until her mother came back with her hands full of long reeds.

"Oh, mother, what are you going to do with those reeds?" Miriam asked eagerly.

But her mother only smiled and answered:

"Watch, little daughter, and see."

She took up some of the reeds and began to weave them together, in and out, over and under, and Miriam, watching her, said:

"Is it going to be a new mat for the floor, mother?"

"No." The mother smiled again. "Not a mat, little daughter."

So Miriam went on watching while her mother went on working, weaving in and out, and over and under. Presently the loose ends of the reeds were turned up and caught together.

“Oh, I know,” Miriam exclaimed. “It’s a basket! But it’s such a big basket, mother; what are you going to use it for?”

“Yes,” mother answered. “It is to be a big basket. Now watch and see if you can guess what we are going to use it for.”

But Miriam grew more and more puzzled as she watched her mother make a lid for the basket, and cover the basket and the lid with pitch. Then she put it away so the pitch might dry and harden.

While it was drying and hardening, mother made some soft cushions, and into Miriam’s mind crept a queer guess, but it was so very queer she was afraid to tell it for fear her mother would laugh at her.

But when the basket was dry and her mother

began to fit the soft cushions into it, Miriam asked timidly:

“Mother, is it—could it be a boat for baby brother?”

Mother laughed.

“You are a very clever little daughter,” she said. “That’s just what it is; a soft, safe basket boat for baby brother.”

But when it was all finished and mother took the baby, who was asleep, and put him into the basket boat, and covered him over quite comfortably and warm, and said, “Come, sister,” Miriam was frightened.

She clung to her mother’s skirts and whispered:

“Mother, mother, where are you going? What are you going to do with baby brother?”

Mother stopped and kissed her and held her close for a moment.

“Don’t be afraid, little daughter. The Heavenly Father will take care of baby brother; we can’t do it any longer.”

So Miriam was comforted and walked beside her mother to the river bank. On the bank, among the reeds which grew tall and close together, the mother stooped and pushed the little basket boat out on the water.

“See,” she whispered to Miriam, “it will float about here among the reeds, and somehow the Heavenly Father will watch over it, so that no harm comes to our precious baby. I must go back now and get father’s dinner. You hide here in the reeds and see what happens, and if any one comes, run quickly and tell me.”

So Miriam hid among the reeds, never taking her eyes off the little basket boat, floating on the water. The baby Moses slept sweetly and cozily, the river rocking his little basket boat as gently as a mother rocks a cradle. After a little while she heard voices and knew that some one was coming.

Now, very close to where the baby Moses was rocking and sleeping in his little basket boat, was the place where the lovely princess



"What Strange Thing Is That?"

who was Pharaoh's daughter, came to bathe in the river. Perhaps Miriam's mother knew this, and knew also that no one else would dare to come there. Miriam, peeping through the reeds, saw the princess coming down, nearer and nearer to the little basket boat, rocking, rocking, gently on the water, and as she watched she wondered what the lovely princess would do when she saw it there.

"Look," she heard the lovely princess say. "What strange thing is that floating among the reeds? Bring it to me."

One of the maidens with her drew in the little basket boat and, opening it, they found inside, the beautiful baby. Of course he wakened, and when he saw the strange faces looking down at him, he cried.

"Ah, the poor little darling," the princess said, taking him out of the basket and holding him close in her arms. "He is one of those Hebrew babies the Pharaoh said must be drowned. But, oh, he's much too sweet and

dear to be drowned. I shall take him for my own, and then my father would not think of drowning him. He shall be an Egyptian baby."

At first Miriam wanted to cry out:

"He's our baby, you can't have him."

But she thought of how the soldiers would drown him if the princess didn't take him, and that made her feel like crying, too. Then suddenly she thought of a wonderful plan. Slipping out from her hiding-place, she came quite close to the lovely princess.

"Would you like to have a nurse for the baby?" she asked timidly. "I can bring you a good one."

The lovely princess, looking down at her, smiled and said, "Yes," and Miriam ran as fast as she could to bring her mother.

"Just think, mother, who found our baby!" she cried, all out of breath. "The lovely princess, and she will save him from the cruel Pha-

raoh, and she wants a nurse. Come, mother, hurry, hurry!"

So Miriam and her mother hurried to the river bank, where the lovely princess still held their baby in her arms. The lovely princess liked the mother at once, and said to her:

"Will you take the baby and nurse him for me?"

How gladly the mother took him, her own dear baby, and hugged him close. She and Miriam took him home, and for a long time the lovely princess let them keep him. Miriam could play with him as much as she liked, and they could let him cry, and laugh and crow all he wanted to, because the lovely princess had adopted him for her own, and saved him from the cruel Pharaoh.

STARTING ON A LONG JOURNEY

IN the home of the lovely princess, Moses grew up like a prince, but he never forgot his real mother and his dear sister Miriam, and I think he went often to see them. His mother taught him about God and God's laws, and though he lived in the palace of a heathen king, he worshiped his mother's God.

The wicked Pharaoh was still very cruel to the Hebrew people, and they were most unhappy. One day when Moses had grown to be a man, God spoke to him, saying:

"I have chosen you for my messenger to go before the wicked Pharaoh and tell him that he must let my people go away and live in another country where they can be safe and happy."

Moses went before the king and told him what God had said, but Pharaoh answered:

“I will not let the people go. They must stay here always and work for me, and I shall treat them just as cruelly as I please.”

But the next day Pharaoh wanted a drink of water, and when he raised the cup to his lips he found the water as red as blood. Then some of his courtiers came before him crying out:

“Our river, our beautiful river! It has turned into blood. What shall we do?”

Pharaoh sent for Moses, and said:

“Take away this terrible punishment and I will let the people go.”

But when God had turned the river again into clear, clean water, Pharaoh said:

“I will not let the people go.”

He treated them more cruelly than before, and they were more unhappy than they had ever been. Then Jehovah filled the country with flies. There were so many flies the people could not eat or sleep because of them.

Again Pharaoh sent for Moses and said:

“I will let the people go.”

But when Jehovah took away the flies Pharaoh would not let the people go. Jehovah sent another punishment; locusts which ate up the grain and the gardens and the grass and the leaves on the trees.

The Egyptians said:

“We shall starve.”

And Pharaoh said to Moses:

“If Jehovah will take away the locusts, I will let the people go.”

But when all the locusts were gone, Pharaoh said:

“I will not let the people go.”

So Jehovah sent another plague and another and another, and each time the wicked Pharaoh said:

“I will let the people go.”

But each time, when Jehovah took away the plague the wicked Pharaoh broke his promise and would not let the people go.

At last Jehovah said to Moses:

“Tell my people to get ready for their journey, for I shall send such a terrible punishment upon the wicked king that he will be glad to let my people go. Tell every family to kill and roast a lamb for food to take with them, and to sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon their door-posts. This night the angel of death will come to Egypt, and take away the first born in every home, except where the blood is sprinkled on the door.”

In every Egyptian house that night, even in the palace of the wicked king, there was great grief and sorrow, for in every house a son had died. But on the door-posts of the Hebrews the blood of the lamb was sprinkled for a sign that the death angel was to pass over and touch no one.

The Hebrew children watched their fathers and mothers packing up everything that belonged to them, getting ready for the long journey into the new country Jehovah had promised them for their own home.

“Where are we going?” the children asked.
“How shall we know the way?”

But none of the fathers and mothers could tell them that.

“Jehovah will tell us when it is time for us to know,” they said, “and He will surely lead us so we shall not lose our way.”

And that night while the people of Egypt were mourning for their dead, the Hebrews marched out of Egypt, following Moses, and trusting Jehovah to lead them safely into the promised land. And before them as they marched they saw a flame of fire, reaching from the ground up to the clouds. At first they were afraid.

“What is it?” they asked, but none knew until Moses told those who marched nearest to him and they passed the word along to all the others, and the fathers and mothers told the children.

“Do not be afraid,” they said. “It is the Heavenly Father’s way of leading us. He has

promised to go before us by day in a pillar of cloud to show us the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give us light.”

WALKING THROUGH THE SEA

THE Hebrew people, going out of Egypt, walked and walked until they came to the shore of the Red Sea. Here they pitched their tents and built their first camp-fires. The children, who had never before been out of Egypt, were very happy. Never before had they taken such a long walk, and they were very, very tired. They were glad when the tents were up and the warm soft rugs were spread for beds. Soon they fell fast asleep, and in the morning they were rested and ready to explore this new land by the sea.

Down in Egypt they had seen the big River Nile, but that was nothing like this great wide rolling sea. They went down close to the edge, and saw how the waters stretched on and on as far as they could see.

“Wouldn’t it be fun to wade in?” they said, gleefully, but their mothers warned them, saying:

“No, no, that would be dangerous.”

The next day the children were too frightened to play. The fathers and mothers were frightened, too. A man came running into the camp, shouting:

“Pharaoh and his hosts are pursuing us. They are almost upon us!”

Oh, the terror of it! The cruel king and his soldiers behind them, and in front of them this great, deep, rolling sea! What could they do?

The children clung screaming to their mothers, and the mothers were too frightened to comfort them.

Then Moses, their great leader, stood before them and said:

“Stand still, and see what Jehovah will do. I will talk to Him and He will show us a way out.”

Jehovah did show them a way out, and it was a very wonderful way.

When Moses stood before them again, he said:

“Get ready quickly to march, before the king’s soldiers come upon us.”

Quickly they began to pack up the rugs and take down the tents, wondering all the while which way they would march, with the king’s soldiers behind them and the great sea in front of them. When all was ready, Moses led them down to the very edge of the water.

More than one little girl clung close to her mother and whispered:

“Oh, mother, I’m afraid. Won’t we all be drowned?”

But the mothers answered:

“No, no, somehow the Heavenly Father will take care of us.”

“But, oh, mother, through that wide, wide sea! Look at those big rough waves! How can He, mother?”



Moses, Their Great Leader, Stood
Before Them

And bravely the mothers answered:

“I don’t know, dear. But His hand made that wide, wide sea, and His hand rules those rough waves, and so I am sure we need not be afraid.”

So they followed on, and at first they could not see the wonderful thing that had happened because there were so many people in front of them. But when they, following behind those in front, who followed close behind Moses, came down to the edge of that wide, wide sea, there was no water there!

The Heavenly Father who made the sea with its deep, deep water, had piled that water high on either side, and made a dry path straight across to the other shore. And the children and their mothers and fathers and the grandmothers and grandfathers, walked, walked, walked, all night long right where the wide, wide sea had been, and they all came, in the morning, oh, so very tired and sleepy, but safe, and dry, to the other shore.

The soldiers of the wicked king saw that dry path Jehovah had made through the sea; they saw the water piled in high walls on either side of the path. At first they were dazed with the wonder of it. Then they heard their captain's order, "March!" They followed after the Hebrews, marching out on that dry path, until they were all out in the midst of where the sea had been, and suddenly, before they could move forward to where the Hebrews were safe on the opposite shore, or back to the shore they had started from, the great walls of water were turned loose, and all the king's soldiers were drowned in the sea.

The Hebrew people, their hearts filled with happiness and thanksgiving, sang joyful songs of praise to the Heavenly Father, for His goodness to them and their children.

"The Lord hath done great things for us," they sang, "whereof we are glad."

ESTHER'S SILVER COLLAR

AMONG the people who were going from Egypt to Canaan were two little girls, Esther and Miriam.

Miriam rode on a big camel with her mother, and when they came to a camping place her father set up, for them to live in, a wide tent, hung about inside with soft, lovely rugs to keep out the cold winds which blew across the desert. On the sandy floor he put other soft, beautiful rugs, and pretty lamps hung from the roof of the tent. When everything was in place it made a sweet, comfortable home for Miriam and her mother and father.

Miriam and her mother had many lovely dresses and jewels, and other pretty things. The one Miriam cared most about was her mother's mirror. It was not made of silvery glass like your mother's mirror, but of copper,

rubbed and polished until it shone like glass, and Miriam, looking into it, could see her own little dark face crowned with black curls, looking back at her.

Miriam's mother had many beautiful gold collars and rings for her ears and bracelets for her arms, and bands to wear on her hair, and Miriam, too, had as many as it is right and proper for a little girl to have.

One day Miriam said:

"Mother, Esther has a collar far more beautiful than any of ours. It is silver, and it belonged to her great, great—oh, ever so many greats—grandfather. And they keep it safely hidden away, but to-day Esther begged her grandmother to show it to me."

Miriam's mother was surprised to hear about Esther's silver collar. Esther and her mother and grandmother had no camel on which to ride. They had only a little donkey, and on his back they packed their tent and their other belongings. It was such a wee tent,

with just a few poor rugs for Esther and her mother and grandmother to sleep on. But though there was not much else in their little tent, there was always a great deal of love, so Esther and her mother and grandmother were very happy.

Miriam and Esther were great friends and walked and played together every day. Miriam thought it much more fun to walk and run and play with Esther than to ride on the big camel with her mother. She loved, too, to rest sometimes by the side of the road and listen while Esther's grandmother told them stories. She told them true stories of wonderful things which had happened to the Hebrew people.

One of their favorite stories was about a man named Joseph, whom the king of Egypt had loved and honored, and once Esther's great, great—ever so many greats—grandfather had done something which pleased Joseph very much, and Joseph had given him a beautiful and very precious silver collar. Now

after all these years and years and years, this silver collar belonged to Esther, and there was nothing else in all the world of which she was so proud.

One day Moses called all the people together and told them they were going to be allowed to do a very lovely thing. It was to build a big, beautiful tabernacle in which to worship the Heavenly Father.

Moses reminded them of how the Heavenly Father had led them safely out of Egypt and across the Red Sea, how He had cared for them all and loved them. Even the children like Esther and Miriam remembered, and they loved the Heavenly Father and were glad there was something they might do to show their love.

“Every one who loves the Heavenly Father,” Moses said, “every one who has a willing heart may bring a gift and we shall put all the gifts together, and when there are enough we shall build the tabernacle.”

The happy people looked among all their

treasures which they had brought from Egypt, and brought those which they loved best as gifts for the tabernacle.

Some brought gold and silver; some brought wood and some purple and fine linen. Miriam's mother gave her beloved copper mirror, and Miriam gave her best gold hair band. Esther's mother and grandmother brought out a piece of fine linen they had been saving a long, long time, and gave that.

Esther, watching all the others bring their gifts, wondered what she could give. She had so little. There was just one thing she owned, and that was quite too precious to give away.

One day she went away by herself and stayed a long time. At last she came back, walking very slowly, but when she came to the little tent where she lived with her mother and grandmother, she ran in quickly and said:

"Mother, grandmother, may I give my silver collar?"

"Your silver collar!" exclaimed grand-

mother. "Your beautiful silver collar that the great Joseph gave to your great, great, great grandfather!"

She was so shocked she didn't stop to count all the "greats."

Esther's eyes were full of tears, and somehow those tears made a big lump in her throat so she couldn't answer. She just nodded her head so fast her black curls danced.

Mother spoke quickly so the tears wouldn't have a chance to overflow.

"The collar is yours to do with just as you please, dear. But let us talk it over together, and if you are very sure you want to give it to the Heavenly Father who has done so much for us, grandmother and I will not say no."

Esther ran to her mother and threw her arms about her.

"Oh, mother," she sobbed, "I've thought and thought about it for days, and, grandmother, at first I felt just as you do; it seemed too pre-

cious to give away. It's the only pretty thing I have, and some girls have so many. But, grandmother, that is why I must give it; because it is all I have to give, and because it is so precious and so beautiful. I love the Heavenly Father so much I want Him to have the very best. Please."

She was smiling now and coaxing so prettily that no loving grandmother could have said no. And mother understood as only mothers can, and did not want to say no.

So they went to the box where they had put it away so carefully, and taking out the beautiful silver collar, they went together to the place where all the gifts for God's house were gathered, and left it there.

The men who gave their time, and willingly did the work, put the beautiful collar with other precious silver gifts which had been brought, and melting them all together, they made them into rings on which to hang the curtains of the beautiful tabernacle, which was

to be God's house. And Esther was always happy in the thought that she had given the best she had to make the tabernacle more beautiful.

A PRINCE WHO WAS NOT AFRAID OF GIANTS

WHEN Othniel was a wee baby, his lovely princess mother sat in front of their tent, in the purple twilight, holding him in her arms, and singing to him of the beautiful land of Canaan which was soon to be their home.

When he was bigger and could go out in front of their big tent, and play with other boys, he heard them boasting of the land of Canaan, where they would live in houses instead of tents, and in cities instead of this great lonely wilderness.

When he grew old enough to walk down through the open spaces between the rows of tents, which were like streets, with his father Caleb, he heard his father talking to other men about the wonderful land of Canaan into which

they would soon be going. His father Caleb was a prince, tall and strong, wise and very brave, and Othniel was proud and happy when he could walk beside him.

One day Othniel heard his father and mother talking together.

“Moses, our great leader, has called a meeting of all the princes,” Caleb said, and then he went away to the big tent of Moses.

When he came back from this meeting, Caleb and Othniel’s mother talked a long time, and after that Caleb began to get ready to go on a long journey. Of course Othniel wanted to know all about it, and Caleb said:

“It’s a great secret, son. Could I trust you with it? Would you be very sure to tell no one about it?”

Othniel promised, and Caleb knew he would keep his promise, so he told him part of the wonderful secret.

“We are getting near, now, to our new home, the land of Canaan,” he said, “where we shall

all be so happy and comfortable together. Moses, our great leader, is sending twelve men to spy out the land. We are to go in and find out all we can about it, whether there be walled cities, what grows there for our cattle to eat, and what kind of people live there. I can not tell you when I shall be back. It is a dangerous undertaking, but the great Jehovah will take care of us, and He will watch over you and your mother while I am away. When I come back I shall bring you a present."

The boy was much excited over the great secret, but he was careful to tell nothing at all about it to any of the boys with whom he played, because he had promised and his father trusted him.

Day after day he waited, and when it seemed as if it were time for the return of the spies, he went each day to a place outside the camp to watch for them. Forty days had passed, when one day he saw twelve men coming toward the camp, and he knew at once that his father,

Caleb, was one of them. They carried with them many things to show what the land of Canaan was like. Two of them carried between them on a pole slung across their shoulders, the largest bunch of grapes the boy had ever seen.

Othniel was glad indeed to see his father, Caleb; he was proud to be allowed to come out thus to meet him, and to walk into the camp beside him. The people came thronging out of their tents to meet the twelve men, and to hear what they had to tell about the land they had been visiting.

But they went first to the tent of their great leader, Moses, and just before they went in, Caleb put into the hand of Othniel a beautiful, ripe pomegranate, saying:

“Here is what I brought to you. Go home now to your mother, and soon I shall come.”

Then Caleb, and his friend Joshua, and the other men went into the tent of Moses, their



The Spies and the Grapes

leader, where all the rulers of the people were gathered together to hear their report about the land of Canaan.

The report was that it was a good land, a beautiful land, as Jehovah had promised them it would be.

“But,” said ten of the men, “there are giants in that land, and we would be as grasshoppers in their sight.”

Caleb and Joshua, brave and true, spoke up at once saying:

“To be sure there are giants there, but Jehovah is our God. Is He not greater and more powerful than any Giants? Has He not brought us out of Egypt? Did He not lead us across the Red Sea? Has He not cared for us and fed us through all our journey?”

“Yes,” answered the ten men, “but we can not go into that country. We would need a great many soldiers to help us fight those giants.”

“Yes,” said the rulers, listening to the ten men who were afraid.

“No,” said Moses. “Jehovah would fight our battles for us, as Caleb and Joshua have said.”

Then the meeting was over for that day and Caleb went home, and that night he told Othniel about the beautiful land they had seen, its flowers and fruits, its rivers and hills, and its strong walled cities. And he told about the giants, and Othniel crept closer to his father, and said:

“I’d be afraid to go there.”

But Caleb said:

“You must not be afraid, my son. Jehovah, your heavenly Father, is more powerful than any giant. He will keep us safe from harm if we trust in Him.”

But only Caleb and Joshua and Moses believed that. The other ten men said it was not safe to go, and the people listened to them, and said:

“We are afraid.”

Because they would not trust Him, Jehovah said that none of these people who were afraid should ever go into the beautiful land of Canaan. And He turned them back, and year after year they wandered about in the lonely wilderness.

Othniel's mother sang before their tent in the lovely purple twilight, but she sang no more of the beautiful land of Canaan. Othniel and the boys with whom he played before their tents, when they made camp, grew too big to play. Caleb became an old man; the ten men, and all the others who had been afraid, died in the wilderness, and at the end of forty years, Caleb and Joshua, and those who had been children in that long-ago time, but now were men and women, came again to Canaan.

CROSSING THE JORDAN

THE Israelite people were camped near the Jordan River. On the other side of the river was the Land of Canaan. If they could cross the river, they would be at last in the beautiful land Jehovah had long ago promised them for their own. Because their hearts were filled with fear they had never gone in to take the land.

The river was wide and deep, and in that long-ago time no one had learned how to build bridges. Miles up the river was a place called a ford, where the water was shallow enough for horses and people to wade across, but soldiers who lived in the land of Canaan guarded that ford so closely that the Israelites could never have gone in that way. Here, where they were camped, the current was so wide and deep there was no need of soldiers.

The children, playing between the rows of tents, went often to look at the river roaring along in its deep bed, and were afraid of it. These children knew nothing of how Jehovah had led His people across the Red Sea, except what their fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers told, and even these fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers had almost forgotten, because they were only little children when that happened.

That was more than forty years ago, and of all the people who had been grown up then, only Caleb and Joshua were left. Caleb's son Othniel was a man now, and Miriam and Esther were grown up, and had little sons and daughters of their own. Joshua was the leader of Israel, for Moses had grown old and died.

Jehovah remembered how the people's hearts had been full of fear, and He said to Joshua:

"The time has come for you to go into Ca-

naan. Only be thou strong and very courageous, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Then Joshua chose men to work with him, and he said to them:

"Go to all the people and tell them to be ready in three days, to march into Canaan."

These men went up and down between the long rows of tents and delivered Joshua's message to the people.

They knew that between them and Canaan was the wide, deep, swiftly flowing river, but without asking questions, the people of Israel made everything ready as Joshua had commanded. All of the tents were taken down and rolled up; all their belongings were packed and placed on the backs of camels and donkeys. The children gathered up their toys and looked after their pet lambs, to see that none was left behind. At last everything was ready.

Then Joshua received the command from Je-

hovah to go forward, and he passed it on to the officers, and they passed it on to the people.

“We are going to cross into Canaan. Be ready. March.”

The children asked of their fathers:

“How shall we cross the wide, deep river?”

And the fathers answered:

“We do not know, but the great Jehovah will make a way.”

The priests, dressed in their priestly robes, and jeweled breastplates, and carrying the Ark of the Covenant, came first. They marched to the very edge of the river, a raging, roaring torrent between its deep banks, all the people following close behind them. There before them was the stormy, foaming water, but the command was to go forward, and the priests, bearing the Ark, which meant to them the help and presence of Jehovah, stepped out into—No! Not into the water, for as they stepped out, trusting in Jehovah, the water before them was

suddenly taken away. It was as if God's great hand reached down and drew back the water like a curtain, holding it there while the people crossed in the dry bed of the river.

Holding tight to their father's hands, the children stepped out as bravely as the rest. Mothers clasped their babies close; the way was rough and hard, and the water held back in that wonderful way made a great roaring, frightening sound all about them, but they pressed on courageously, remembering Jehovah's promise to Joshua, to be with them whithersoever they went; knowing that His power was great and His promise sure.

One by one they came at last to the other shore, the priests bearing the Ark, Joshua and Caleb and Caleb's son Othniel; Miriam and Esther, grown up now, with their children gathered about them. All the great multitude of people were at last in the land of Canaan which Jehovah had promised to them.

When all were safely across, even to the last

patient donkey, and the last little pet lamb, the Power which had held back the waters like a curtain, was withdrawn. Down came the great river again, tumbling and roaring wildly back into its bed like a caged beast turned loose, and as the people watched it, praising Jehovah for His great goodness to them, the Jordan River became just like it had been before.

The men and women and children of Israel, safe at last in Canaan, sang a glad song of Thanksgiving to the Lord of Hosts who had led them there. A great pile of stones was made, and left there to remind all who came that way of the power and goodness of Jehovah.

TAKING A CITY

THE city of Jericho was very beautiful and much to be desired. Strong walls encircled it, a valiant king ruled over it, and many men of war guarded it. There were watch towers upon the walls, and watchmen to tell what went on outside the city as well as inside.

One day these watchmen sent word to the valiant king:

“A host of people are marching toward our city.”

After a while they sent another message to the king.

“These people are camping round about our city. They are the Israelite people who crossed the Jordan River, where it was widest and deepest and swiftest and most dangerous.”

Jehovah had said to Joshua, the leader of the Israelite people:

“I shall give to my people this city of Jericho to be their city.”

Joshua called the people together and told them the glad news.

“We are to camp close about the city,” he said. “We are to watch all the gates to see that no one goes in or comes out of the city.”

So it was that the watchmen upon the walls saw the great host of people moving toward their city, and later saw them putting up their tents and preparing to live there until Jehovah gave them the city.

After the tents were all up, and the camp was made, Joshua called the people together again, and gave them another command from Jehovah.

“We are to choose seven priests, and give to each one a loud sounding trumpet. The seven priests, blowing the seven trumpets, are to march round the city, with all our soldiers following them. Once each day for six days they

are to march around the walls of Jericho, and then on the seventh day they are to march around the city seven times.”

Marching round and round the walls of the city! How foolish it seemed! How could they take a city in that way? But the people made ready as Jehovah told them to do. The seven priests were chosen and each given a loud sounding trumpet, and with all the soldiers following after them, they marched once around the walls of Jericho.

The watchmen upon the walls sent word to the valiant king, and hearing the sound of trumpets blowing and the tramp, tramp of many feet, the king came out upon the wall to see what strange thing was happening. The soldiers he saw were many, and the sound of the trumpets blowing was triumphant. The people of Jericho were filled with fear, and prayed to their idols for help.

But when the soldiers, led by the priests



The Loud-Sounding Trumpets

blowing the trumpets, had marched around the city, and gone away, doing nothing else, the people inside the walls of Jericho said:

“They can not harm us that way. Let them march and blow their trumpets if they like.”

Still they kept the watchmen in the watch towers upon the walls, to see if anything more would happen. And next morning the watchmen saw the seven priests with their seven trumpets, coming out from the camp, followed by all the soldiers. They heard the blowing of the loud sounding trumpets, and the tramp, tramp of many feet, as the priests, followed by the soldiers, marched around their city.

“How strange,” said the people inside the walls. “Why do they march around our city like that?”

Still they kept the watchmen in the watch towers upon the walls, and the next morning the watchmen sent word to the king that the seven priests, blowing their seven trumpets,

and followed by the soldiers, were coming again, and again they marched about the city walls.

“How foolish,” said the people inside the walls, and they began to laugh.

The fourth day and the fifth day and the sixth day the watchmen upon the walls saw the seven priests come out from the camp blowing their loud sounding trumpets; they saw all the soldiers following, and the people inside the city heard the steady tramp of many feet, but they had grown accustomed to it now, and gave no heed.

On the seventh morning the watchmen upon the walls again saw the priests come out from the camp, blowing their loud sounding trumpets; they saw the soldiers following, but they only laughed, and paid no more attention. But after a while they said:

“Why, those priests and those soldiers are marching around the walls a second time.”

They sent messengers to the valiant king to

tell him about what was happening, but the king said:

“Let them march and blow their trumpets if they like. It brings no harm to us. After a while they will get tired, and they will go away, and then we can go in and out of our city, just as we used to do.”

But when the watchmen upon the walls saw the priests followed by the soldiers, marching round the city the third time, and the fourth time, they again sent messengers to the king, and the king said:

“Let our priests pray to our gods.”

But their gods were made with their own hands, and had no ears with which to hear their prayers, and no eyes with which to see their trouble, so how could they help?

Five times, six times, seven times, the priests, blowing their loud sounding trumpets, and the soldiers following after, marched around the city of Jericho. Hour after hour they marched and the people in the camp of

Israel were watching, and praying to Jehovah who had always helped them with His great love and power. As the priests and the soldiers marched around the seventh time, the people in the camp, watching and praying, became quieter and quieter, until there was perfect silence.

Then suddenly there arose in the camp a loud shout of joy and triumph, for the strong walls of Jericho fell down, and the priests, still blowing their loud sounding trumpets, with the soldiers following after, marched into the city, and took it for their own in the name of the great Jehovah.

GIDEON AND HIS VALIANT THREE HUNDRED

STEALTHILY Gideon worked in his father's field, looking furtively about from time to time to see if any one watched him.

Presently a man came running toward him.

"Run! Run for your life," shouted the man, as he came near. "The Midianites are coming."

Gideon dropped his work and fled. In a deep dark cave across the fields he found his mother, and in a few moments his father and brothers came running in. Deep in the cave they hid in terror, for the rest of the day and all through the night. When they came out cautiously and fearfully in the morning, their enemies were gone, but all of their grain had been destroyed.

There was a great host of the Midianites

camped round about the people of Israel, and again and again they came down upon them, destroying the grain, stealing the cattle, and filling the Israelites with terror for their lives.

Gideon was only a boy and he could not understand the reason for all this.

“Why don’t we go out and fight them and drive them away?” he asked his mother. “Look! I am big and strong. I could fight.”

But his mother sighed and shook her head.

“No, no, son,” she said. “They are too many for us. And we have no leader. Our people have forsaken the laws of Jehovah, and have become idol worshipers like the people about us. Ah, if we but had a leader, brave and true and trusting in Jehovah, like Moses and Joshua of old.”

“Tell me stories of Moses and Joshua,” begged Gideon, and his mother told him fascinating tales her grandfather had told her, of Moses who had led the people out of Egypt, and of Joshua who had led them into Canaan.

Gideon, working in the fields, and watching always for the enemies about them, fearing to be surprised and attacked, wished there might be another Moses or another Joshua to lead the Israelite people out against the Midianites, and that he might go with them.

So, working in the fields when he could, and hiding in the caves when the Midianites came down upon them, destroying their grain, stealing their cattle and killing any of the people who could not escape, Gideon grew to be a man.

One day he was beating out grain in the wine press. That was not the right way to do it, but he did it that way so the Midianites would not see him. As he worked he heard a sound, and turning saw some one standing under a great oak tree near him. It was not a Midianite nor a man of Israel. He was a stranger, and though Gideon knew not why, his heart leaped within him as he looked upon this strange visitor.

"I am a messenger from Jehovah," said the stranger.

“He must be an angel,” thought Gideon, and bowed down and worshiped him.

“Jehovah has chosen you,” said the angel, “to be the leader of Israel. You are to lead the people out and drive away the Midianites.”

“Oh, no, no,” said Gideon excitedly. “How could I be chosen for a leader? My father’s family is poor in Israel, and I am the least in my father’s house.”

“But Jehovah knows you are brave and true, and He will be with you and help you.”

The angel talked a long time with Gideon, to prove to him that Jehovah had really and truly chosen him to be the leader of Israel against the hosts of Midian.

Then the angel set for Gideon a hard and dangerous task. He was to go in to the city and destroy the altar which the people had built there for their heathen gods. Gideon chose ten men to help him and in the night they cut down and destroyed the altar.

Early in the morning the men of the city

saw what had been done, and they began to inquire about it.

“Whoever has done this terrible thing,” they said, “shall be put to death.”

When they found out that it was Gideon who had cut down the altar, they said to his father, Joash:

“Bring out thy son that he may die.”

But Joash said:

“If the heathen gods are angry because their altar has been destroyed, let them put him to death if they are able to do it.”

Of course idols have no life nor power nor strength, so Gideon’s life was saved.

He sent word to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, to all the men of Israel to come to help him drive out the Midianites, and thirty-two thousand men gathered together to fight with him.

“There are too many,” Jehovah told Gideon, for Jehovah wanted Israel to learn that He would fight their battles for them, if they

would worship Him and trust and obey Him. "Send back all who are afraid."

So Gideon took the men up where they could overlook the camp of the Midianites, and when they saw what a great host was there, many of them became afraid, and twenty-two thousand went back to their homes. This left ten thousand men to fight with Gideon, but Jehovah said:

"There are still too many. When you start out on your march, and come to the brook, watch the men, and those who get down on their knees to drink are to go back, while those who lap the water from their hands as they run, are to go on."

The men had marched a long and weary way, and were tired and thirsty when they came to the brook. Many of them dropped down on their knees and drank long and eagerly, to quench their burning thirst. But some, eager to be on their way to drive out the Midianites,

dipped the water in their hands and lapped it as they ran. Soon these men were across the stream, while the others were still on their knees drinking. Gideon told the men who went down on their knees to drink that they might camp there by the brook, and wait while the others went on with him.

When they started again on their march, Gideon counted the men who were with him, and there were only three hundred men to go up against that great host of the Midianites.

“Never fear,” said Jehovah. “By the three hundred that lapped will I save you and deliver the Midianites into thine hand.”

That night Gideon took Phurah, his servant, and crept stealthily down through the darkness, to the camp of the enemy. They saw the Midianites camped all along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number as the sands by the sea. As Gideon looked at them he thought of his

little band of only three hundred men, waiting back there in the night, and his heart was filled with fear.

He and Phurah crept closer and they heard two of the sentinels talking softly.

"Last night I had a strange dream," said one, "and it worries me. I dreamed I saw a loaf of barley bread roll down the hill into our camp and overturn a tent."

"You may well worry," said the other man, "for that means that the great army of Israel is come out against us, to slaughter us and drive us out of their land."

Gideon smiled in the darkness as he and Phurah slipped away.

"They think we have a great army," he whispered. "They are afraid of us. Jehovah is on our side and we shall conquer."

Gideon returned to his three hundred brave men and gave them new courage, saying:

"Jehovah hath delivered into your hands the hosts of Midian."

He gave to every man his weapons; strange weapons they seemed: an empty pitcher and a torch. He divided his three hundred into three companies, one hundred in each company. Gideon led one company, and sent the other two companies to different sides of the camp of the Midianites.

“Whatever I and my company do,” he commanded, “do thou likewise.”

In the dark when all the camp of the Midianites were asleep except the sentinels, Gideon led his little band of brave and valiant men down to the camp.

Suddenly the deep silence of the night was broken by a great crash which wakened all the Midianites and filled them with terror. How could they know that it was only the pitchers in the hands of the men of Israel, all broken at the same time? How could they know that the dazzling flare of light was not a great fire consuming their camp, but merely torches in the hands of three hundred men. These three hun-

dred men were blowing upon their trumpets with a great noise, and shouting with all their might, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon." And with a terrible fear in their hearts, the Midianites ran from their tents, each man drawing his sword as he ran. Thinking that the enemy was in their midst, they plunged swords into any one who came near them in the darkness, and killed great numbers of their own people.

So it happened that when the morning came, the only living people left in the valley were Gideon and his brave three hundred. Now they could go back to the people of Israel and tell them that the enemy was gone, and that they could safely live in their own homes and till their fields and raise their cattle.

And I think that perhaps Gideon went home to his mother's house, and that she put her arms about him and said:

"My brave, brave son! You are a great leader in Israel like unto Moses and Joshua."

And that Gideon shook his head and said:

“No, no, mother, it was not I but Jehovah who delivered us from the Midianites.”

D A V I D

DAVID AND HIS HARP

DAVID, out in the field with his beloved sheep, lay on his back looking up at the sky. Flying white clouds floated high above his head, and David, happily watching them, laughed softly to himself. Suddenly he sat up, and reaching for his harp which lay beside him on the grass, began to make up a new song. It was a song about the blue of the sky and the softly moving clouds, and the sun which shone by day and the stars which twinkled at night in the sky no longer blue but deeply purple.

At home David had big brothers and a brave father whose name was Jesse. He had a dear mother, and I think it was she who taught him to play his harp, and to sing the songs which were in his heart and on his lips. His father taught him to be brave and true and strong

and to trust in the great Jehovah who was his Heavenly Father, and who cared for him and loved him, even as he cared for and loved his lambs.

His brothers had taken him out in the fields when he was little and taught him how to use a sling; how to choose just the right kind of stones, and just how many times to swing it above his head, and then let it go at exactly the right moment to hit the hungry old mountain lion or the bear which came prowling round after the sheep. They gave him a lamb for his own, and he cared for it tenderly and faithfully. As he grew older he went oftener and oftener into the fields with his big brothers and learned more and more about watching the sheep. At last there came a time when his brothers went away to war, and David was given the task of caring for the sheep.

Closely and carefully he watched them each day. Tenderly and wisely he led them to places



David and His Sheep

where the waters were cool and still and where the grass was soft and green and juicy. By cool waters and in green pastures he led them, and one day as he lay on the grass, thinking sometimes of his sheep feeding all about him, and sometimes of the Heavenly Father who loved him and cared for him as he cared for his sheep, a new song came into his heart, and he took up his harp and began to sing:

The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside the still waters.

Sometimes he thought of his big brothers gone to war, and hoped there would come a time when he, too, might go to war and be a brave soldier and fight for their great King Saul. Once he had seen the king. How fine he looked; tall and strong and handsome, dressed in his armor, with a helmet of shining brass upon his head.

Saul was a great king and David loved him, but sometimes he heard his father and other men talking about the king, and their voices were low and sad as if some trouble had come to him. One day when David was allowed to sit near them and listen, it seemed as if they thought the king was not so great and good as he ought to be; as if he were forgetting the ways of Jehovah, growing selfish and wanting his own way instead. David, alone with his sheep and with his harp and his song, thought of all these things, and wondered if he had heard aright.

A man came into the field looking for David. It was one of his father's servants.

"David," he said, "you are to go at once to your father. Take your harp. I will care for the sheep."

When David came into the house, his father said to him:

"Our great king is ill both in mind and body. No one seems able to help him. He lies in his

great darkened tent, speaking to no one and refusing to be helped or comforted. Abner has sent for you to bring your harp, that you may play and sing for the king. Perhaps that will make him feel better and happier.”

“Oh, father, I couldn’t play for the great King Saul. I should be filled with fear.”

“You filled with fear,” his father answered David. “You who are not afraid to stay alone in the fields at night watching the sheep?”

“Ah, but, father, the great Jehovah is with me then and cares for me,” said David.

“But you are not afraid of the mountain lions, nor of the hungry bears who sometimes attack the sheep,” said his father.

“I know. The great Jehovah helps me to drive them away and kill them,” again answered David.

“And the great Jehovah will help you in the king’s tent,” promised his father. “He will give skill to your playing and sweetness to your singing, that you may be able to help the king.

Would you not like to feel that you have helped to make him better and happier?"

David said, "Yes, I will do the best I can, trusting in the great Jehovah," and went his way to the camp.

Abner, general of all King Saul's armies, met David, who knew Abner and loved him; he had no fear of him although Abner was a great soldier. Abner kissed his cheek and said:

"I am glad you have come. We have waited anxiously for you."

He led David to the king's tent, and drawing out of the ground the two spears which were crossed there to bar the entrance, he went away, leaving David standing just inside the tent.

It was dark after the glare of the sun on the sand outside, and he had almost to feel his way across the ground to the curtain which divided the tent. The inner room was dark too, and until David's eyes grew accustomed to the

shadows, he could not see the king. His heart beat quickly as he went nearer; he knew that sometimes it angered the king to have any one see him when his body was racked with pain and his mind was filled with evil thoughts. But David heard no sound. After a little while he could see the king's long body stretched on the ground as if he were asleep.

Praying to the great Jehovah for courage, David took from the harp the long cool grasses with which he had twined it, that the cords might not snap with the heat of the sun. Falteringly his fingers found the strings, and he began to play softly the song he knew best, the song the sheep loved and followed.

The king paid no heed. David played on, and presently he saw with eyes grown keen now in the dark, that the king was watching him. Would he drive him away in anger?

Again he prayed to Jehovah for help, and as he played on, he saw the great king lie back upon the ground and close his eyes again.

Softly, tremblingly at first, David played and sang the songs he had made out in the fields, songs of the flying birds and floating clouds; of the sun by day and the gleaming stars by night. He played the song the reapers sang as they gathered in the harvests of rich, ripe grain, and by this time the king was listening, and David was no longer afraid. Bravely and with assurance he played the chant of praise with which men followed the dead, and the merry tune that lovely maidens sang at wedding feasts.

Then there came into David's heart a new song. It was of a great king who loved his people, and whose people loved him, and did him honor; a king who led his soldiers bravely into battle against the enemies of his country, and helped his people to be great and good; a king who forgot himself and his own sorrows, and lived only for his people and for Jehovah.

Slowly Saul raised himself upon his elbow, listening intently; wishing that he were such

a king as this one David sang about; believing at last that he could be such a king if he tried; determining that with the help of Jehovah, he would be such a king.

As David finished his song triumphantly, the black scowl of evil anger and the look of fierce pain cleared away, and in their place came a kindly smile and a word of thanks for David.

DAVID AND THE GIANT

DAVID came out of the king's tent, and told Abner, the king's general, that the king was better. Abner was glad and thankful, and took David about the camp, introducing him to the soldiers, and telling them what David had done for the king. David looked about him and saw the tents of Saul's army covering the whole mountain side, and across the valley he saw the great army of the Philistines, Israel's enemy, camped on another mountain.

When he reached home, he told his father that the sick king was better, and that he had seemed to like the music of David's harp. He told him, too, all about the camp of Israel, and about the Philistine camp on the other side of the valley.

"Did you see the giant in the Philistine camp?" asked his father.

“No,” David answered.

“I have heard that there is one,” said Jesse. “He is very terrible, it is said, and every one is afraid of him.”

David was sorry he had not seen this terrible giant, and he wished that some day he might go again to the camp. How glad he was then, when his father said, not many days later:

“To-morrow I wish you to take a bag of parched corn and ten loaves of bread to your brothers in the king’s camp. And here are ten cheeses which you may take as a present to their captain.”

Early the next morning, David, leaving his sheep with a keeper, went again to the camp of King Saul. He hoped he would see the king again, and that this time he would not miss seeing the giant of the Philistine camp.

His brothers were very glad to see him with his corn and bread, and took him to their captain that he might give to him the present of

ten cheeses. The captain was pleased with the gift, and treated David with much kindness.

While the captain was thanking David, they heard a great shout, and looking down in the valley, they saw the giant coming out from the camp of the Philistines.

“That is the champion of the Philistines,” explained the captain to David. “His name is Goliath and he has been a fighter all his life.”

Goliath looked like a fighter. He was ten feet tall, and on his head he wore a helmet of brass, and casings of brass upon his great legs. He wore a heavy coat of mail, and on his back was a brass target. In his hand he carried a long heavy spear.

All of the soldiers of Israel fled to their tents when they saw him, for they were afraid of him.

“Can you see?” whispered the captain, drawing David inside his tent. “He comes out like that every day, to challenge us. King Saul has

offered great riches to the man who will kill Goliath, and will also give to such a man his daughter, the princess, in marriage.”

Now David cared nothing for riches, nor for the king’s daughter. He said:

“Who am I that I should be son-in-law to the king?”

But he cared for the honor and glory of Israel, and he said to the captain:

“Why does no one go out to accept his challenge and fight against him?”

His brothers were angry that David should speak thus boldly to their captain, and they called him a foolish child, and told him he should hurry back home to his sheep.

But David turned to the captain and spoke again.

“Will no one go out to fight this wicked giant, for the honor of Israel and Jehovah?”

The captain was not angry; he was amused and laughed at David:

“It may look easy to you, but no man in all

our army, not even our great king, could fight that giant."

"I would," David said simply.

The captain laughed again.

"Come on," he said. "We'll tell that to the king."

They took David to the tent of King Saul, and David said to the king:

"I will accept the challenge of this giant, and will fight for the honor of Israel and Jehovah."

"You," said King Saul. "Why, you are only a boy, and this giant has been a man of war all his life. You could not go out against him."

But David was very much in earnest, and he said:

"Oh, King, I know I am not a soldier. I know I am only a shepherd boy. But at home, when I keep my father's sheep, I face danger every day. Sometimes mountain lions attack my sheep, and I have to be brave and kill them. Sometimes bears, fierce and hungry, spring

upon my flocks, and I dare not hesitate with fear, but must kill them to save my sheep and sometimes to save my own life. Once both a lion and a bear came upon my flock together. That was dangerous, but I prayed to Jehovah, and He put courage into my heart and strength into my arm, and I slew both the lion and the bear. Jehovah, who delivered me and my sheep out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, will help me if I go out in His great name to fight this giant."

The king, looking down at David, just a lad with fair face and sunny hair, thought how foolish for him to think of going out against the giant. But when he saw how David's heart was full of courageous trust in Jehovah, he said:

"Go, and Jehovah be with thee. But you must not go unarmed."

He took off his own coat of mail, and his shield and helmet, and put them on David, and armed David with his sword. It was a great

honor to wear the king's shining armor, and David's heart filled with pride as he took the king's beautiful sword in his hand. If his brothers could see him, they would not mock him now, and call him a foolish child who could do nothing but care for the sheep in his father's fields.

But after all David had not proved the king's armor; he had not practised with the king's sword. He wanted to go forth only in the strength of Jehovah, so he said:

"Oh, King, I should not know how to fight with your armor on, and I am not accustomed to using a sword."

He took off the shining armor, and laying aside the beautiful sword, he took his shepherd's staff in his hand, and with a prayer in his heart, went out to face the giant. As he crossed the brook in the valley, he stooped and chose five smooth stones and put them into the shepherd's bag which was slung across his shoulder. In his hand was his trusted sling.

As he drew near, the giant came forth again, calling out in his loud voice:

“Come out and fight with me. Are you all afraid? Send some one who can kill me and the Philistines will surrender to you, and be your servants; but if I kill him, you shall surrender to us and be our servants. Ho, ho, you are afraid, you are afraid.”

Tauntingly he called to the army of Israel, and David went out alone to meet him. When the giant saw this lad with shining hair, slim of body and fair of face, he laughed again, and mocked him.

“Send they a boy like you to fight with me? Come on, I will give your flesh to the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.”

But David was not frightened.

“You come with sword and shield and spear,” he answered the giant. “But I come in the name of Jehovah, who leads the armies of Israel, and fights for them. It is He who will help me, and I shall smite you. It is I who will

feed your flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field."

David's brothers and their captain, and the other soldiers of Israel's army, watching David and hearing how he answered the giant, were filled with fear for him, but David was not afraid.

"All of these people who are watching us," he said, "shall know that there is a God in Israel, and that it is He who fights our battles for us."

The giant, angry now, because David showed no fear, started toward him, but quickly David put his hand in his shepherd's bag, and drawing out a stone he put it in his sling and twirling it about his head with great skill, let it go with unerring aim. The stone struck the giant in the forehead with such force that he fell on his face to the ground.

David ran swiftly, and drawing the giant's great sword from its sheath, cut off the giant's head.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled, and King Saul's army, no longer afraid, ran after them and drove them out of the land.

The king would let David go back no more to his father's house and to the sheep in the fields, and thus his wish that he might some day be a soldier in King Saul's army came true.

DAVID THE FRIEND

IN the king's camp, David made many friends. Everybody loved him, but the one who loved him best of all and the one David cared for most, was Jonathan, the king's son. One day David and Jonathan made a covenant to be friends forever, and Jonathan took off his princely robe and put it upon David, and gave him his sword. Now David owned two swords, for he had been allowed to keep the one he had taken from the giant. But, of course, the one he treasured most was the one his beloved friend, Jonathan, had given him.

David was as good a soldier as he had been a shepherd, and as soon as he was old enough, Saul made him a captain, and he went out wherever the king sent him. His soldiers all loved him, and he led them so gallantly that

they were always victorious. Because David won so many victories over the enemies of Israel, all the people praised him. When he came home from battle, they went out to meet him with cheers, and with shouts of joy.

At first King Saul loved David too, and was very proud of him and his victories, but the spirit of evil came more and more often into Saul's heart, and when these fits of anger were upon him he was jealous of David, and hated him.

Often and more often, he said to himself:

"The people love David more than they love me," and his hate and anger grew until he wanted to take David's life.

Once when David was playing his harp before the king, trying again with his beautiful music to drive out the spirit of evil which made him ill and wicked, the king's wrath and hatred grew so strong that he threw his javelin at David. Springing quickly out of harm's way,

David ran from the king's tent, and came no more to play before him.

But though the jealous king hated David, the people loved him, and Jonathan was still his friend. When David's life was in danger because of the king's anger, Jonathan warned him and saved him from the king's wrath.

One day he said to David:

"Saul, my father seeketh to kill thee. Hide in a secret place until morning, and then I will come unto thee and tell thee all my father's plans."

Jonathan went back to his father's tent and talked to him about David. He reminded him of how brave David had been when he fought the giant and saved the armies of Israel from the Philistines.

"David has not sinned against thee," he said. "He would love thee and serve thee well, if thou wert willing."

Saul, listening to Jonathan, was ashamed of his anger toward David.

“As the Lord liveth,” he declared, “David shall not be slain.”

So Jonathan brought David to his father’s tent, and once again they were all friends together.

But the next time David went out to battle, and came home victorious, the people went wild with joy, and going out to meet him, sang:

“Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands.”

Saul, hearing them, grew jealous again, and in his anger threatened David’s life, so David’s home-coming was spoiled, and he fled away to hide in the hills.

One day he came secretly to see Jonathan, his friend.

“What have I done that thy father is always seeking my life, and that I dare not live in my home in safety? Even the lives of my dear father and mother are in danger, and I shall have to find another place for them to live.”

“Oh, no,” answered Jonathan. “My father

promised me you should not be slain. He does nothing great or small without telling me about it, and he hath said nothing to me about doing thee harm."

"Ah, but your father knows," said David, "that thou art my friend, and he will not tell thee of this thing because he knows it will grieve thee. Truly, as the Lord liveth, there is not a step between me and death."

Jonathan's heart was filled with sadness to see his friend in such distress.

"Whatever thou wantest me to do, I will do it," he promised.

"To-morrow begins the Feast of the New Moon," said David. "Saul will expect me at the feast, but I dare not go. I shall go instead to my father's house in Bethlehem to keep the feast there. On the third day can you come to tell me whether your father is angry with me for not coming to keep the feast here? We must be careful that none see us talking together or harm will come to you."

“This is what we shall do,” said Jonathan. “On the morning of the third day, hide out in the fields among the rocks where you hid once before. No one will know that you are here. When I have found out how my father feels toward you, and what he is planning to do, I shall come out to the field, bringing my bows and arrows. I shall also bring a lad with me, and I shall shoot an arrow toward the rocks where you hide. When the lad goes to pick up the arrow, if I call to him, ‘Look, the arrow is on this side of you,’ you will know my father is not angry and that you may safely come home.

“But if I say to the lad, ‘Run, the arrow is beyond you,’ you must go away again, for that will mean that my father’s anger is great toward you, and that he seeks to take your life. But, oh, David, remember this, whatever happens, we are friends forever. Swear to me, that no matter what my father does you will love me.”

David swore to love Jonathan always, and

they parted. The next day at the feast David's place was empty, but on that first day Saul said nothing. When David's place was again empty on the second day, Saul asked why he was not there.

"He asked me to tell you," answered Jonathan, "that he wanted to go to his father's house in Bethlehem to keep the feast."

Then King Saul was angered again. He was angry with Jonathan as well as with David and Jonathan knew David would not dare to come back to his home for fear of his life.

The next morning he went out in the field, carrying his bow and arrows, and taking a lad with him. Shooting an arrow toward the rocks where he knew David was hiding, he said to the lad:

"Run, bring the arrow to me."

When the lad came near the rocks, Jonathan called out loud enough for David to hear:

"Look, the arrow is beyond you."

David, hiding in the secret place among the



"Bring the Arrow to Me"

rocks, knew that his life was in danger, and that he must again go away.

But he waited, hoping to see Jonathan again before he went away, and when it was safe to do so, Jonathan went out to see him. They told each other good-by, swearing to love each other and be faithful friends, no matter what happened.

DAVID THE SOLDIER

DAVID, fleeing from King Saul's anger, traveled a long way, and was very tired. Coming at last to a cave where he knew that he could safely hide, at least for a little time, he stopped to rest. When he could he sent word to his father and mother so they would not be distressed about him. His brothers and his father's servants came to him in the cave, to bring him food and comfort and to give him courage.

"Let us gather together a company of men who are your friends," they said, "and you shall be our captain, and lead us to victory."

"But your lives will always be in danger," David answered. "If you cast your lot with me, you will be outcasts, fleeing from place to place to escape the wrath of Saul."

But they loved David so much they were quite willing to live the life he lived, to face the same dangers he faced, and to hide where he hid. They wanted only to be with him; they were proud to fight with such a brave soldier, and soon he was captain of four hundred men.

David was a good son as well as a good soldier, and the first thing he did was to find a safe place for his father and mother to live. For the wrath and hatred of King Saul extended even to them, and their lives were in constant danger. David asked the king of Moab if his father and mother might come and live in his kingdom until he could again win the friendship of the king. The king of Moab was friendly toward David, and allowed him to bring his father and mother to live in his land in peace and safety.

Soon David and his brave company of four hundred chosen men became famous. When men were shearing their sheep and, fearing the bands of robbers who sometimes came upon

them, they asked David to bring his soldiers and protect them, and David always went gladly and willingly.

Sometimes when cities of Israel were attacked by the Philistines, David and his brave little band came and drove out the enemy. So everywhere people knew and loved David and his valiant four hundred, and Saul, hearing of David's victories, and how the people praised him, became more jealous and angry, and more determined to take David's life.

Again and again Saul and his soldiers sought to capture David and his little company, but whenever he came near, Jehovah warned David and delivered him from the hands of the king.

Once David was hiding in a wood and Jonathan came to see him there.

"I know," said Jonathan, "that it is you and not I who will be king when my father is gone. My father knows it too, and that is one reason why he hates you and seeks to do you harm.

But I love you, and I know that Jehovah's plan to choose you for the king of Israel is best."

They swore again to be friends as long as they lived, and Jonathan went away leaving David happy because of his love.

David was not to remain in safety in the wood very long. Those who owned the wood went to King Saul.

"David, whom you seek," they said, "is hiding in the wood. If you will come with us, we will show you how to find him."

But some of David's friends heard of this plot and came to warn him. He and his men escaped to the other side of the mountain, but Saul, hearing which way they had gone, followed them. Just when it seemed there was no possible chance of escape for David and his little band, messengers came running to King Saul.

"The Philistines have come upon Israel and will destroy us," they cried.

So Saul made haste to take his soldiers back

home to drive out the Philistines, and once more David escaped.

But when Saul had driven out the Philistines, he came again in search of David. He took three thousand chosen men, determined in his heart to capture David and his little band. They were in the wilderness, a rocky, barren place where only wild goats lived. Saul and his soldiers climbed from rock to rock, even as the goats climbed, but David and his men, accustomed to living in rocks and caves, hardened to rough climbing, kept always just a little ahead of Saul and his great army.

At last the king was so wearied with climbing that he lay down in a cave to sleep. One of David's men came running swiftly to tell his captain that the king was sleeping.

"Now is our chance," he said. "While Saul sleeps we can creep into the cave and take his life, and you will be freed from your cruel enemy."

David made no answer, but he slipped away

and crept into the cave alone, where King Saul was sleeping. How easy it would be now, to take his sword and thrust it into the heart of his sleeping enemy. Then he would be free to go back to his home and live in ease and happiness. Perhaps as Jonathan had said, he would be chosen in Saul's place, to be the king of Israel. He would try to be a good king, not forsaking Jehovah as Saul had done and leading the people into evil ways, but teaching them to obey Jehovah and to do His will.

Perhaps David thought of all these things as he looked at the king, asleep, helpless before him. He drew his sword, bent over his enemy who for weary weeks and months had hunted him like a wild beast, but instead of thrusting the sword into the king's heart, he cut off a bit of his robe, and went away leaving Saul quietly sleeping.

David went back to his men and showed them the piece of cloth.

"See," he said softly, "I could have delivered

myself forever from my enemy, but I would not lift my hand against the Lord's anointed. God forbid that I should kill my master and my king."

He slipped away again without telling his men where he was going.

When Saul awakened and came out of the cave, he heard a voice behind him saying:

"My Lord, the King!"

Turning, he saw David, bowing with his face to the ground.

"Oh, King," cried David, "why do you listen to men who tell you evil stories about me? I have never sought to do you harm. I love you and if you would but let me I would serve you well. Only to-day, the Lord delivered you into my hand. While you slept, I stood in the cave beside you, so near I could have pierced your heart with my sword, but I would not. See, I was so near, and you slept so soundly, I cut this piece from your robe."

David held out the bit of cloth, and Saul, looking at it, was amazed and ashamed.

“You see how easily I could have taken your life,” David spoke again. “But I have not sinned against you. You hunt me to slay me; hunt no more. Take me; do with me what you will. But my hand shall never be upon thee.”

How ashamed Saul felt! How sorry! He bowed his head and wept.

“Oh, David, my son,” he cried. “Thou art more righteous than I am. You have given me good for evil. May Jehovah give good to you for what you have done for me this day.”

Thus David, whose brave heart was full of goodness and love, forgave Saul his enemy, and they parted friends.

DAVID THE KING

DAVID, going about with his brave band of soldiers, helping to drive the enemies of Israel out of the land, protecting the sheep shearers from marauding bands of robbers, thought often of the happy days when he was a shepherd boy caring for his father's sheep. Watching over the fields at harvest time to prevent the Philistines from destroying the ripe grain, he longed to see again the fields about his home in Bethlehem. Sometimes he sang for his men the song he had heard the reapers sing when he was a boy.

Often as a soldier, he slept under the stars at night, and remembered the nights when he slept in the fields with the sheep, and he knew that the Heavenly Father who had cared for him then and made him unafraid, still watched over him, and kept him from danger and harm.

Sometimes as he lay awake, with his soldiers sleeping all about him, he thought of the visit Samuel, the prophet, had made to his father's house. He remembered that Samuel had sent word that he was coming and that he wanted to see all of Jesse's sons. But Jesse, David's father, had thought Samuel meant only the grown-up sons, so David was allowed to go as usual to the fields with the sheep. Later in the day, one of his father's servants had come running into the field, saying:

"Your father wishes you to come at once to the house. Samuel, the prophet, is there; he has looked at all of your older brothers, and says of each, 'He is not the one. Is there not another?' So your father has sent for you."

"But what could the prophet Samuel want of me?" David had asked.

"He does not tell. He only asks to see you and your father says you are to come at once."

"Watch the sheep well," David had said, and ran to his father's house.

He remembered how Samuel, the prophet, had looked at him and smiled with gladness as he said:

“He is the one. Jehovah hath sent me here to anoint his head with oil, and to set him apart for special service.”

Samuel, the prophet, had poured the sweet-smelling oil on David's sunny hair, and blessed him and sent him back to his task of watching the sheep. What had he meant? David, the shepherd, had wondered often, and now David, the soldier, still wondered. Was it true, perhaps, as Jonathan had said, that Jehovah had chosen him to be king of Israel after a while. Would Jehovah give him strength and courage to be a better king than Saul had been?

Then there came a day when David knew that Samuel had anointed him to be king of Israel. King Saul was killed in battle, and Jonathan, his son, was killed with him. David's heart was filled with sorrow over the loss of his king and of his dearest friend, and he wrote



To Be King of Israel

a song about it, and commanded that it be taught to all the children. Part of the song was this:

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan;
Very pleasant hast thou been to me;
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of woman.

The prophet Samuel came again to anoint David king, and they talked of that other time of anointing, and Samuel told David that he knew then that Jehovah had chosen him to be king some day, and the knowledge had made Samuel's heart glad.

The king's great tent was David's now, to live in, and he made it very beautiful, for David loved beautiful things. His harp was in his tent, and he sang new songs of praise to Jehovah, and he had these songs taught to his people, that they too might praise Jehovah for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men.

He sang songs of the beautiful earth which

Jehovah had made, and of the sun which shone by day and the stars and moon which gave light and joy by night, so that the people who learned these songs might never look about them at the beautiful earth which was their home, or at the glory of the sun, or at the radiance of the moon and stars, without thinking with love and thankfulness, of the great Jehovah who made them all.

One day a lame boy came into King David's beautiful tent and looked about him, filled with fear. His name was Mephibosheth, and he was the son of Jonathan, David's friend who had been killed in battle. Mephibosheth knew how his father had once been King David's best friend, but he knew, too, that his grandfather, Saul, had been King David's cruel enemy.

The king had sent for him to come to his tent. Was it that he might be put to death because he belonged to the family of King Saul? He came hobbling in on his poor, twisted, crippled feet, and waited in the outer room of King

David's tent until the king should summon him to appear before him. This outer room was hung with lovely curtains, and on the floor were soft rich rugs. Once Mephibosheth had lived in a beautiful tent with his father, Jonathan, but now he was an outcast without a home and without a father.

With his heart full of sadness and fear, he waited for the king's summons. Presently the curtain that separated this outer waiting-room from the king's throne room, was drawn back, and there stood a man with kindness in his face and eyes, and with gentleness and pity in his voice as he said:

"Come in, my son."

And somehow Mephibosheth knew that this was King David, and that he had nothing to fear.

He bowed before him as best he could with his crippled feet, but King David held out his hand and helped him to a comfortable seat. Then he sat down beside him and talked to him

a long time about his father Jonathan. He told him stories of their boyhood together, and told him again and again how he and Jonathan had loved each other.

“And now,” said the king, “I have asked if there were any of King Saul’s family left to whom I could show kindness, and they have told me of you. And I have sent for you to live always in my house, and to eat at my table. I shall love you for your father Jonathan’s sake, and for his sake you shall be my son.

“There is land that belongs to your father, and it shall be yours; and we have found a man who was your father’s faithful servant, and he and his sons and his servants shall till this land for you so you shall no longer be poor.”

And ever after Mephibosheth lived in the king’s tent, and was as the king’s own son.

The End

GENTLE CIRCULATION,
CHILDREN'S ROOM

